



Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Re-set and Recovery

Our Post-Pandemic Commitments

2021-23

DRAFT



Summary from XXXX

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Executive Summary

As the national vaccination programme continues to be rolled out during 2021, restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are gradually being released and we are beginning to emerge from the immediate impact of the pandemic into an endemic and recovery phase.

There is much to reflect on and learn from recent events. It is with caution that we move into recovery. We know that the impact of multiple national lockdowns will continue to be far-reaching and as the virus is still mutating and moving through parts of the country, we must continue to monitor cases, outbreaks and support the most vulnerable in our society. This activity will continue throughout 2021, so we have to balance a desire to help our businesses and residents re-establish aspects of their lives and livelihoods restricted by national directives, with the continued vigilance required from a national pandemic.

We have all had different experiences of lockdown. What we do know is that for some communities, families and businesses the implications have been devastating, and a predicted economic recession will only add to these challenges. Conversely, COVID-19 has presented opportunities. Not least when it comes to the environmental impact from the way our economy was structured and the increase in the use of ICT solutions for many businesses.

The pandemic has reminded us all of the importance of individual-focused support and has highlighted the need to underpin resilient sustainable communities and economic interventions with a Green recovery.

As a Council we responded quickly and effectively to the challenges COVID-19 presented but the response across the District was so much more. Businesses, residents, our communities, our Parishes, and our partners all stepped up and did a brilliant job of caring for the most vulnerable in our society. It was humbling to see



and one of the greatest team efforts we collectively could ever have hoped for. It only serves to emphasise the difference we can make and the influence we have, when we work together. The role that volunteers in particular played throughout the pandemic should never be forgotten.

As partners such as the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority begin to introduce initiatives designed to support an economic recovery, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), will aid recovery and innovation in ways specifically designed to support our district, reflecting what we have learned and what we could do differently in the future.

This document is focused on activity that takes a holistic, whole society, approach to the current pandemic. This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Business Plan (2021-22) and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). We still intend to deliver the priorities we have set out in these plans. The actions in this document though focus on how we can go further, and respond specifically to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. We have been listening to the voices of our communities and local businesses and want to tailor our response in ways that will best support South Cambridgeshire through the recovery phase and after.

We know things are still very difficult, and uncertain, but we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a place that offers an excellent quality of life, in every way, for our residents and those who work or visit us here.



Where are we now?

The pandemic has highlighted some of the most important challenges our society faces, including:

1. **Communities** in our Districts have come together to offer vital support to vulnerable individuals, reducing loneliness and isolation. These groups have provided an extension to Council services in many cases, providing crucial 'on the ground' information about how services should be delivered and ensuring quick responses to requests for help. In 2020 South Cambridgeshire had around 5,000 volunteers helping with the response to the pandemic. It was a quite wonderful, heartfelt and vital part of ensuring residents of the District were supported.
2. Our **Businesses** have been severely impacted. The Council's Business Support Team have been inundated with requests for help and for Government Grant funding. It is clear that some businesses will not re-open post lockdown, and many will need continued support to re-establish their income streams, stabilise their businesses and then begin to grow again. Throughout the pandemic many businesses have shown incredible ingenuity, placing more of their services on-line and offering goods and services in ways previously unimaginable. The learning from this agility and potential new markets must not be lost.
3. The pandemic has hit those **most vulnerable in our society** the hardest, widening gaps and acutely highlighting issues of inclusion, equity and opportunity. We know that there has been a disproportionate impact on young people, women, minority groups and those living in areas of deprivation. Domestic Violence, risk of homelessness, mental health issues and health issues more generally, and debt have all increased. People who were experiencing poverty will continue to be at risk of further economic hardship throughout 2021, as Government grant schemes, such as furlough and changes to tenancy agreements, come to an end. There is great uncertainty about a consumer-led economic recovery, given that



some people have seen massive decreases in their income and continue to be concerned about job security. We are facing a ‘forced’ recession, as the result of a societal ‘shock’, and as such we cannot be sure how deep it will go and how long it will last.

4. The pandemic has also shone a light on the public sector and our traditional ways of working. The pandemic has reinforced the need for, and the benefits of, **partnership working**. Throughout 2020, regionally and locally, our public sector services have responded quickly, working with our local communities, designing new services and support schemes, with a shared sense of purpose. It showed how, with a joint focus and clear outcomes, the public sector can work in an agile and successful way. Many public sector organisations have also modernised their relationship with customers and service users, through better use of technology. We have an important responsibility not to lose all these ways of working, particularly with key partners including our neighbouring Local Authorities, the County Council, Health and the Combined Authority.

There are signs of hope emerging which relate to the roll-out of the national vaccination programme. However, we also know that variants of concern continue to be a factor in our attempts to limit infections and hospital admissions. It is expected that booster vaccines will be required for many in the winter and we may face further lockdowns or restrictions if infections and hospitalisations grow. In short, the virus is not going away, we must learn to live with it, and we will support our communities and businesses to do so.



Our Post Pandemic Commitments

We will:

1. Place our Communities at the heart of our recovery
2. Work with our businesses to help them stabilise and rebuild during economic uncertainty
3. Ensure those most impacted by the pandemic are supported
4. Continue to strengthen our relationships with key partners, to deliver joint, practical solutions to local challenges

Principles for Delivery

- Co-design – listen for the quiet voice
- Committed Collaboration with Partners
- Consistent and genuine Communication
- Customer and Quality of life focused services
- Continuous Improvement and learning
- Inclusivity



Our Focus

1. Inclusive, Healthy and Connected Communities

The role of strong, inclusive, caring and resilient communities has been an enormous factor in helping many people through the pandemic. We have all been reminded that 'bottom up', locally driven approaches usually work best.

We want to engage and build meaningful relationships with our communities. We want to hear all voices and we want to involve local people in decision-making processes – whether that be hearing views on areas of growth; or understanding what local parishes and groups feel their communities need.

The roll of volunteering and locally based groups cannot be underestimated throughout the pandemic. It has been inspiring. We want to continue to work with local groups and create more opportunities for volunteering (recognising that current people are very tired) and more focus on projects that residents feel will benefit their communities.

We will place Community-led and locally developed plans at the heart of our approach to recovery. We are working with our parishes to identify, and find solutions for, local challenges. We also want to work closely with the County Council as a strategic partner to better plan, influence and work alongside those services that directly impact upon our residents.



2. Rebuild a thriving economy

Whilst we are fortunate to benefit from a city of international acclaim such as Cambridge and the reputation and economic standing it brings, we cannot take this for granted. The United Kingdom has also recently left the European Union and the implications of this from an economic and societal perspective have still to be fully realised. It is likely that the city and surrounding areas will recover more quickly economically than other parts of the country but the current economic instability is considerable.

We want South Cambridgeshire to have a thriving economy, linked to the success of the City of Cambridge, but as a destination of choice for businesses and visitors in our own right.

Over the past 12 months, the financial resilience of many businesses has been eroded. Employers including micro, small and medium sized companies will need support to re-build their business base. We want to stop businesses that were thriving pre-COVID, from now failing. We will need to be quick and agile in our response, tailoring our support to local demands – so business and employment intelligence will be vital. We must ensure that our partnerships with related organisations are strong and we agree priorities quickly. We need to plan for a short and long term recovery with these partners, utilising national schemes and resources as they exist and building confidence in private sector investment.

Many people have lost their jobs or are at risk of unemployment when furlough ends. Helping people find new jobs, re-train and further develop their skills or qualifications will be key. Many individuals will not have been unemployed in their adult lives or sought further education opportunities. We will need to help people navigate through what will be a very uncertain time, and support education providers to provide courses that enable people to re-enter the job market as soon as possible.



We will work with our partners to provide employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, internships and utilising the Kickstart programme to support young people. We will ensure that as an employer ourselves, we do all we can to ensure our recruitment processes are accessible and inclusive. We will expect our development partners to create employment for local people, both directly and through their supply chains. Our areas of growth should benefit local people.

South Cambridgeshire is committed to a Green Recovery. Balancing our commitment to our environment and climate change, with the demands for growth, housing and transport is one of our greatest challenges. We will focus our efforts on key growth sectors, vital to our local economy, utilising local intellectual property to encourage businesses focused on climate change to grow within South Cambridgeshire. We will explore options of creating more 'touch-down' and incubator space for those who may be predominantly working from home.

3. Support those most impacted by the pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, working with local communities, parishes and partners, we have seen the challenges many households face with regards to basic requirements that are often the cause of health inequalities – good food, a warm home and stable employment.

Housing supply and accessibility will remain a key issue for the District, exacerbating a challenge that South Cambridgeshire was dealing with pre-pandemic. Ensuring that housing of different tenures and affordability are brought forward for development will play a key role in supporting our communities and the local economy. We will continue to push for affordable housing on development sites, and to expect high quality energy efficiency in our homes.

We will work with the City Council to tackle food poverty and will continue to work with our communities to prioritise those at risk of food insecurity.



We want people to feel safe in our communities. Domestic Abuse has sadly been the experience of many people nationally during the pandemic and we want to ensure that the Council is well equipped to identify and support individuals at risk of, or experiencing abuse in their homes.

Young people have been particularly affected by the impacts of multiple lockdowns, missed hours of learning and schooling from home. We will work with education colleagues at the County Council to support children and young people whose education has been disrupted. We will particularly focus on those in receipt of Free School Meals, those who are Not in Employment, Education and Training, Children who are Looked after and Children Leaving Care. Ensuring we are helping with any identified needs, such as mental health, Careers Advice & Education, and pathways into employment, education and training.

We will support mental health initiatives and work closely with mental health services, to assist those suffering from anxiety and low-level depression. We have seen throughout the pandemic what happens when acute needs are not addressed immediately.

4. Strengthen our relationships and new ways of working

Further work is needed to assess the inequalities that have been exposed more acutely in our society through the pandemic. We need to approach the planning, delivery and evaluation of our work on recovery differently.

Previously the challenge for SCDC has been balancing the demands for growth, particularly in housing and transport (connectivity) alongside a focus on sustainability. As we face a pandemic-related recession, the Council will need to consider the local impact on business, employment and skills/education in order to help the local economy recover, and once again grow.



Partnership working will continue to be key across a board range of issues. It will be important to work with the County Council on any changes/pressures on their services and with our health colleagues. Working with other Councils in Cambridgeshire, particularly the City of Cambridge, to understand how we can support our collective recovery ambitions and interdependent economic challenges and avoid duplicating efforts; and working on key programmes such as the Ox-Cam Arc which offers considerable opportunities for sustainable growth.

We will work closely with our health partners (including the new Integrated Care System), community groups and parishes and other local authorities, to ensure our communities enjoy good access to healthcare and social care and have support to take positive actions to stay healthy.

We will work very closely with our neighbouring Local Authorities and the County Council, building on the relationships we have established during the pandemic. We will work jointly on key local issues and shared priorities; identifying who is best placed to deliver services and support. We will share resources, skill sets and agreed outcomes, working together as strategic partners.



Action Plan

**SCDC is not directly responsible for all of these actions. In line with our intended approach to partnerships and service delivery, some will be done in collaboration with others. Quite a lot of this is about how we work; our relationships; and re-building the fabric of society and our collective resilience.*

Inclusive, Healthy and Connected Communities

The focus is on: Community-led planning. We will take a community asset and strength-based approach. We will be an ‘enabler’, not a ‘doing to’ organisation.

What we will do	The timeline	Who is responsible	How will we know when this has been achieved?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a clear policy for how we will work and engage with communities (Community/Localism Policy) 2. We will strengthen the focus on outcomes which improve social capital across our Corporate Policies – ensuring that community benefits are considered and removing any barriers to local socially-driven firms, including social enterprises. 3. Create a new grant scheme until Jan 2022 which focuses on groups who improve health outcomes (including for Long Covid-19); reduce social isolation for older people; increase volunteering; support young people’s mental health 			



<p>4. Work with local community-based groups to help them stabilise and recover, rebuild their volunteering base and build their future resilience</p> <p>5. We will investigate how to provide short-term support to day centres and activities for older people while they recover their client base post pandemic. We will work with the County to establish whether services through adult social care for individuals and their carers, are providing the right level of support across South Cambridgeshire</p> <p>6. We will offer a XXX free trial of the Mobile Warden Scheme for those who would benefit from it.</p> <p>7. We will partner with relevant organisations to create district-wide events that support our local Pubs and help them recover their client base</p>			
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Rebuild a Thriving Economy

Our focus is on: Supporting small and medium sized local businesses to stabilise their business base and begin to rebuild and re-grow; ensuring those particularly impacted by the pandemic can access employment and training pathways.

What we will do	The timeline	Who is responsible	How will we know when this has been achieved?
<p>1. Identify those businesses who would benefit from significant start-up/scale up financial backing and advice.</p> <p>2. Develop a Cultural Strategy for the District</p>			



3. Review future options for empty retail premises-including community and business hubs and pop-ups
4. Support businesses to become more environmentally friendly and thereby cut costs; to encourage the creation of new business in the green economy; to focus on ways of working and investments that actively support Green businesses in our areas; and promote spaces and support for collaboration and innovation
5. Expand our recruitment offer to target hard to fill vacancies and Grow Your Own schemes by increasing our apprenticeships, internships and use of government schemes, particularly for young people.
6. Introduce a digital inclusion skills programme — to ensure that people can access services on line and have greater choice over how they interact with public service providers.
7. Ensuring our new Enterprise Zones attract and retain top companies, top talent, and create GVA opportunities that support our Green priorities



Support those most impacted by the pandemic

Our focus is on: Ensuring people have access to basic provisions; Supporting young people; expanding support for those at risk of homeless

What we will do	The timeline	Who is responsible	How will we know when this has been achieved?
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with Cambridge City to address Food Poverty2. Continue to support food banks – do not withdraw support too soon.3. Link our services together, and improve data sharing, to identify and introduce early support if we think people may be struggling to pay their bills (with our partners including the County Council)4. Support an initial investment in whole council domestic abuse training and awareness raising and the improvements identified as part of the Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation.5. Look at opportunities to expand the Wild Minds project (support good mental health for 14-17 year olds) into other locations in South Cambridgeshire6. Work with the County Council to create a locally-tailored package of support for young people, particularly those who were already most vulnerable before the pandemic and at risk of becoming NEET (with clear pathways into further education or employment)7. Continue to deliver a money management and energy efficiency advice service to those at risk of losing their homes			



Strengthen our relationships and new ways of working

Focus is on: Working with the City, County and Health partners in a new way, reflecting the lessons we have learned during the pandemic

What we will do	The timeline	Who is responsible	How will we know when this has been achieved?
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Work with the new Integrated Care System and partners, to ensure that residents have access to good, local healthcare2 Ensure that S106s and healthcare planning reflect the health and community needs of new and expanding communities3 Help our communities plan for further pandemics or further lockdowns and restrictions4 Change our ways of working post pandemic to reduce our environmental footprint and help us become a Carbon-neutral organisation5 Work with the County Council, other districts, health, and police partners to agree and deliver joint priorities; and establish new ways of working for targeted services			



Appendix B:

Relevant Documents:

- CPCA Business Board Annual Delivery Statement
- Prime Ministers 10 point plan for green industrial revolution
- Health and wellbeing strategy
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (2018)
- Local Industrial Strategy
- Zero Carbon Strategy
- Doubling Nature Strategy
- SCDC Investment Strategy
- Business plan
- MTFP
- Local Covid-19 action plan
- Staff survey
- LERS
- Greater Cambridge Economic Plan refresh